

*In Charitet de Luzancy / H.T.K. N° 10*

A ✓  
**SERMON**

PREACH'D AT  
**COLCHESTER**, *June 2. 1697.*

BEFORE THE  
Right Honourable and Reverend Father in GOD,  
**HENRY**  
Lord - Bishop of **LONDON**,

AT  
A Conference with his **CLERGY**  
UPON  
*His MAJESTY'S late Injunctions.*

By **H. De LUZANCY**, B. D. *Vicar of DOVERC.*  
*and HARWICH.*

**Printed by his Lordship's Special Command.**

To which are prefixed some Remarks on the *Socinians* late  
Answer to the *Four Letters* written against them by the  
same Author.

**LONDON**, Printed by *E. Holt* for *Tho. Bennet*, at  
the *Half Moon* in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1697. Q

# MEMORIAL

PRESENTED AT

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS



IN CONFERENCE WITH HIS CLERGY

FROM

THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

AND THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

TO WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
AND THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
WERE JOINED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

AND THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS  
WERE JOINED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
AND THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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To the Reverend Clergy at the Conference,  
June 2.

*Reverend Brethren,*

**T**His Discourse, when pronounc'd before our *most Excellent Diocesan*, had the Happiness to meet with so great an Approbation from you, that even in that respect you might have challeng'd its first appearing in the World: But by your unanimous Application to **HIS Lordship**, that he would be pleas'd to command me to make it publick, it became entirely your own; and I could not without Injustice look for any other, or safer Patronage, than that of so many wise and learned Men, who did me the Honour to desire its Publication.

But there is also a great mixture of *Gratitude* in the Offer which I humbly make to you of it. I am glad of so publick an Opportunity to express to you the deep Sense which I have of your repeated Favours to my Parish, which for four Years last past you have honour'd with a Lecture, wherein you propos'd to your selves no other Encouragement but that of doing Good; your pious Endeavours being like Vertue, which is a Reward to it self, and is abundantly satisfy'd if it can but advance the Great Ends of Religion. I am,

Reverend Brethren,

Your most Humble, and  
Obedient Servant,

LUZANCY.

## The P R E F A C E.

**H**is Majesty's late Injunctions are the Subject of the following Discourse: How wise they are in themselves, and how suitable to the Exigencies of the Church, is visible to any one, who is never so little acquainted with the Disputes of the present Age. The Socinians by opposing the Belief of the Holy Trinity, and the Divinity of Jesus Christ, having brought Religion into Danger, there appear'd Writers of all sorts to defend the Grand and Common Concern of Christianity. But they being Men of different Education, Studies, and Inclinations, manag'd the Sacred Controversie in a different way from one another. Some excellently vers'd in Ecclesiastical Learning, and great Assertors, as well as Judges of Tradition, stuck firmly to the Decisions of the Sacred Councils, and the Determinations of the Fathers: Some addrest to the Speculations of the Schools, follow'd a more abstruse and metaphysical Method: Others us'd to a Philosophical way of arguing, would bring our Mysteries within the usual and receiv'd Principles of reasoning. But all this was not done with the same Abilities and Success. Some made the Judgment of the Catholick Church before, and after the great Council of Nice, to appear with a vast Clearness and Evidence: Some did shew to the learned World, how Grapes may be gather'd of Thorns; and the manner of speaking of the Schools became not only plain, but also florid, and eloquent: Others thought that God had stamp'd in us the Image of his incomprehensible Operations: Unhappy in this, that they gave to weak Similitudes the Name of Demonstrations, and justly anger'd the present, by ridiculing the Terms us'd by the Ancient Church.

This, though indeed well design'd of all hands, yet met not with all the Success which might have been hop'd for. It inflam'd the Socinians, and made them not so much to weigh the Truth it self, as to strive to find some Defect in every one of these ways. The first being most Matter of Fact, was very hard to be oppos'd; and whosoever reads seriously the Answer to the learned Doctor Bull, and is in any degree acquainted with Antiquity, must needs wish for more Exactness and Candor in the Author of that Writing. The second they have profess'dly misunderstood, owning Dr. South as exact and as close a Writer as ever was, to speak the Sense of the Church, but willing to mistake that Sense, and confounding it with Sabellianism, which the Church ever did, and does now detest. The third having given them great Advantages, they have crowded one Print upon the neck of another, and the Authority of the Divine Oracles laid aside, Philosophy becomes the Judge of Religion; and Aristotle or Des Cartes impeach Christ and his Apostles.

But this is not all: Several learned Men amongst us could not bear with these



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these new Notions, or think their Silence justifiable to God and his Church in this Matter: They express themselves warmly against those Uncatholick Terms and Explications, but were answer'd again with Heat and Clamour; and a War began of a strange and unaccountable Nature; all Parties agreeing in the same Design to maintain our Holy Mysteries, and yet divided in the way of pursuing it.

The Injunctions obviated all this, by giving a check to a swarm of Socinian Prints, which with great Industry were dispers'd over the Kingdom; and obliging Divines not only to treat these Sacred Matters calmly, but also to use no other Expressions in their Explications, but what the Churches of God have us'd themselves to: A wise and a truly Christian Expedient to preserve the Peace and Unity of the Church! For of all the Societies which make up the Catholick Church, none ever pretended to say any new thing in this Matter; but as they receiv'd the Faith, so they deliver'd it to us: And to any rational Man, it is a mighty Argument against Socinianism, that those very Churches which have, and do differ amongst themselves in so many other Points, never differ'd in this; and that the great Variety of Superstructures never in the least affected the Foundation.

I hope that this has in a very great measure laid the Heats rais'd amongst us: But it has not silenc'd the Socinians; tho' indeed it appears to me by their latest Prints since the publishing of the Injunctions, that they write more out of a desire to have it said, that they have left no Book unanswered, than really to satisfy themselves and others concerning those substantial Arguments, which have been offer'd to them. This is the most charitable Construction which I can make of the Answers to Mr. Edwards, the Lords Bishops of Sarum and Chichester, and the incomparable Vindication of the Lord Bishop of Worcester. But I think the Answer to my Book to be a singular Instance of this. A Friend of mine, who is a Gentleman of that Perswasion, had often told me that there was one coming, and I expected it with some Impatience, desirous to see what they had to say to some plain Arguments, which I thought of great force, and how they would vindicate so many Places out of their own Books, which they own'd I had cited with a great deal of Truth and Justice. At last my Friend shews me their latest Collection of Answers, amongst which there is one to the four Letters of M. H. de L. I hope it will not be taken amiss if I make some Remarks upon it.

1. It is very diverting to see a Writing call'd an Answer to the four Letters; and not so much as a Page, or Line, or Tittle of the four Letters touch'd. I confess that this is an easie way of answering, and that at this rate any Book upon Earth may be answer'd. Any Body may have the Pleasure to be an Author. But I am not altogether satisfied, that this is consistent with that reputation of Learning and Eloquence which these Gentle-

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men have so justly acquir'd. One or two more such *Answers*, will, I am afraid, sink, or at least endanger a part of it.

2. They give a rare reason for not meddling with the four Letters. I know not, says the Author, p. 47. whether we are concern'd in them, till I know more certainly in what Sence he holds a Trinity of Divine Persons, and the Divinity and Satisfaction of our Saviour? I beg leave of these Gentlemen to assert, that they know as well as I do my self, what is my sence in those Matters. Obscurity is none of the many defects which the four Letters may be charg'd with: But they were not willing to intangle themselves in the discussion of so many Citations, or to make good the weak side of their Writings, which they were sensible could not be maintained. They have found of late a shorter Cut; and that is, the famous distinction of Real and Nominal Trinitarians: They steal away with this on all occasions, and still maintain a running Fight: It is their last refuge; and had it not been for the rare contrivance, there had been before this an end of the Socinian Controversie. To answer a solid Argument, is a hard, and generally an unfortunate Task: But if they can but bring you right or wrong within the Verge of the fatal Distinction, then they have always a large Field for Discourse: They act in this like ingenious, but whether altogether like conscientious Men, I am not willing to determine?

3. They are so full of that beloved distinction, and so fond of meeting with any thing that looks like it, that in what they call an Answer to the Four Letters, they have done to themselves and to me a real Injury. To themselves by a flat contradiction in the space of four Pages; and to me, by charging me with that which I never said or thought: They make me say that the Divine Persons are Three Infinite Spirits. Pag. 43. He says Three Infinite Spirits each of them a God, are all of them but One God: I averr that there is nothing in the Four Letters which directly, or indirectly looks like that: It is not the Language of Scripture, nor that of the Catholick Church: It never was, and I hope shall never be mine. But this they have contradicted, Pag. 47. by desiring to know, in what Sence I hold a Trinity of Divine Persons. One would be apt to say that this betrays a great deal of Incoherency.

4. The Four Letters then are still sound and safe; but the Preface is engag'd, and I must endeavour to bring it off. Two things in it are excepted against: The one, that I said, That the Consent of the whole Christian World must be a strong Inducement to a modest Socinian to mistrust all his Arguments, and that to oppose all that is great and good in the Church of God in a Point of Faith, which Word the Author of the Answer has overlook'd, is too much for the most presuming Disputant. He says to this, p. 40. that the case is this; one side has Argument, the other has Authority and Number: And that in a Clash between Argument and

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and Number, the whole World, and all that is great in it, when weigh'd against but one Argument, is as if you had put nothing at all into the Scale.

*I say that he absolutely mistakes the Case. We maintain that the Church has Reason, as well as Authority and Number; and that on this very Account a modest Socinian must lose much of his Confidence. By all that is great and good, I mean the Sacred Councils, the Holy and Learned Fathers, and the different Societies of Christians all the World over, who have been baptiz'd in the Name of that Blessed Trinity, and look upon Jesus Christ as the Author and Finisher of their Faith. In a Point of Faith, and much less in the Foundation, God will not suffer the Catholick Church to err. Had I said that it had been a Reason to a modest Socinian to mistrust all his Arguments, I had said nothing but what is exactly true: I confess I was too modest my self in calling it only an Inducement.*

5. *The other Exception is against an Assertion, which I thought no Divine in the World would have disputed; That Faith and Reason are two different things; and, consequently, that that which is the Object of Faith, cannot be the Object of Reason. He calls this, p. 41. a very rash Proposition. He says some lines before, That the Apostle teaches, Heb. 11. 1. not only that the Object of Faith and Reason is the same; but that there cannot be Faith without Reason; and that Faith is the Product of Reason. This Author should have consider'd, before he call'd the Proposition rash, that it is the Sense of all the Ancient and Modern Divines; and that tho' sometimes Faith and Reason are conversant about the same Object; as for instance, in the Existence and Unity of God, which Reason considers as well as Faith; yet for all that, their Object is different, and even in this very case, Reason assents to it, as it is naturally known; and Faith, as it is supernaturally reveal'd. The place of the Apostle should not have been mention'd at all. For what is the *περὶ ἡμετέρας ἐλεγχος & ἐλεπομένων*, The Evidence of things not seen, but a Revelation of those things which Reason cannot reach, or penetrate; and on this very account are said to be unseen, and is that *ἐλεγχος*, that Demonstration, which rising from an higher Principle, is different from, and has a greater Certainty than Reason.*

*But what this Author says, That there can be no Faith without Reason, and that Faith is the Product of Reason, shews plainly the misfortune of writing Answers in haste. If by the first of these Propositions he means that Faith is always rational, and that Reason never wants strong Inducements to believe, which the Schools in their rugged Language call Motives of Credibility, I say so too. But if he means, that we cannot believe, except we have a clear Notion of what is propos'd to our Belief; I say, that it is against the Nature of Faith, which offers things above Reason, and expects the submission of our Judgment to the Authority of the Revelation.*

*The second Proposition that Faith is the Product of Reason, is capable of a tolerable Sense, if by it is meant no more, than that Reason is an introduction to Faith: But if by it is meant, that it is the Cause of Faith, I must beg this Author's leave to say, that it is plain Pelagianism.*

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6. *This Gentleman asks me several Questions, wherein I must take the liberty to tell him that I am not at all concern'd, and consequently not oblig'd to answer. He argues very smartly against Three Infinite Minds, Spirits, or Substances; tho', at the same time, I doubt he makes his Adversaries to say more than really they do. I leave him and them to dispute it; yet one of them I think is a Question by no means to be offer'd, and takes off much of the respect due to the Sacred Writings, p. 42. This therefore, says he, is the first Question that I desire Mr. L. to resolve: Will he believe a Doctrine that seems to imply manifest and incontestable Contradictions, if such Doctrine or Proposition were indeed found in Scripture? To this, I answer, that the Question is unreasonable, because the Supposition on which it is grounded is impossible. God cannot contradict himself. A manifest and uncontestable Contradiction in Scripture, is a thing not so much as to be thought of from him, who is Light, and in whom there is no Darkness at all. But I will go farther with this Gentleman; and tho' I love and honour Reason as much as any Man in the World, yet I will affirm, that if it were possible that in any undoubted Scripture there should be in clear and express Terms a Proposition or Doctrine which seems to imply a manifest and incontestable Contradiction, I ought not to reject it, or make my Reason the Judge of God's Veracity: But my Duty is humbly to resign my self to him, and adore what I cannot understand.*

7. *I know that this Gentleman will take this very ill; and will say again, as he has already, p. 41. that I calumniate Reason, the Light set up in us by God himself. But that Light is not given us to impeach and reproach our Maker; and reject what he commands us to believe, or call it a manifest and incontestable Contradiction, because it is above its weak Perceptions: That Light ought to act in its due measure and proportion; if it goes farther, it is a Rebellion and an Attempt against the Majesty and Power of God. He calumniate Reason, who does detract from its Dignity and Energy in those things wherein it ought to be Judge. It is an Affront to Reason to be brought below its self: But he also calumniate Reason, who exalts it more than it deserves; as he no less maliciously injures a Man, who commends in him Qualities which he has not, than he who obscures and denies those which he has. There are some General Principles wherein Reason cannot err, and which Man ought to be guided by. None is more plain and evident than this, that he owes his submission and assent to what God proposes: Whether it be comprehensible, or not comprehensible, is no part of the Inquiry? Whether God has propos'd it, is the true state of the Question? Reason has a Right to examine, Whether God has propos'd it, or no? The danger of taking things upon Trust, is too great to deny Reason the power of examining. But that Point once clear'd, to say that we ought not to submit, because it is incomprehensible, or appears to me manifestly contradictory, is an ill and an endless way of arguing.*

8. *This Author cannot digest the Epithets of Narrow and Corrupt, which I gave to Reason. He complains of it in several places of his small Writing. But indeed is not our Reason such? Can he who denies this, pretend that he ever endea-*  
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woin'd to know himself? I have often wonder'd at the pains which some Men have taken to convince the Opposers of the Doctrine of Original Sin. The shortest and easiest Method was to send them to themselves, to find there the fatal consequences of the first Transgression. I appeal to my ingenious Adversary, whotho certainly a great Master of Reason, yet upon second Thoughts will agree with me that the Reason of the best Men is very Narrow and Corrupt. Whence do proceed so many Mistakes and Errors, Misapprehensions and Inadvertencies, but from that very Principle? Is not this the Spring of so many hot and tedious Disputes? And what Reason but this can be given of so many Books and Opinions which have divided Mankind?

In this the Excellency of Faith appears, and for this we ought to praise its Author, the Holy Jesus, that it has rectify'd and improv'd Reason not only by making it more knowing, but also more humble, more sincere, and more obedient to God.

I am sure that this is the Method of arguing of the Primitive Fathers in that mighty struggle with the Heathen Philosophers, some of whom did so exalt Reason as to pretend to decide of every thing; whilst others did so revile it, as to be positive that nothing could certainly be known; and consecrated that wild and extravagant Saying of Socrates, Hoc unum scio quod nihil scio. This I know that I know nothing. Both disputed admirably one against another. But when the Apologists for Christianity were oblig'd to take in hand the Cause of Religion; altho they had the true Notion of Reason, Res Dei Ratio, says elegantly Tertullian, and knew it to be the Light of God in us, yet they own'd it to be narrow and corrupted, and consequently not Reason, but Faith and Revelation to be attended to. Thus Justin Martyr, Arnobius, Tertullian, Lactantius, St. Austin, and others: Tertullian de Anima, c. 1. Cui enim veritas comperta sine Deo? Cui Deus cognitus sine Christo? Cui Christus exploratus sine Spiritu Sancto? Cui Spiritus Sanctus accommodatus sine Fidei Sacramento: And St. Austin de morib. Eccl. Cath. c. 2. A Book never enough to be read; who speaks of Reason in Terms which must certainly please those Gentlemen, calling it, Perspicuitas, & sanctitas Rationis, the Clearness and Sanctity of Reason; yet says, that it is so much obscur'd by Sin, Passion, and Prejudice, that, Saluberrime comparatum est, ut in lucem Veritatis aciem titubantem, & velut ramis humanitatis opacatam inducatam auctoritas.

9. This shows how much this Gentleman is in the wrong, when he says, p. 42. that I must be content to argue these Questions about the Trinity and Incarnation not from Scripture only, but from Reason also; nay, from Reason chiefly and ultimately. As far as Reason is subservient to find the Truth and Certainty of the Revelation, I confess that I must argue from Reason; and the Chiefly and ultimately is capable of a good Sense; because the belief of our Mysteries is at last resolv'd into this most rational Proposition, That I must believe what God has reveal'd; and that to find that it is so in the sacred and undoubted Scriptures, is certainly the Work of Reason. But if he means that, the Authority of God's Word laid aside, we must bring those Mysteries to the Scrutiny of Reason; and instead of Divine, use only Humane and Philosophical Disquisitions,



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tions, I say that it is a new, an unreasonable, and an unchristian Assertion.

It is new : For this very Author is too much conversant with Antiquity, not to know, that in the long Contests between the Orthodox, and the Arians, Nestorians, &c. the Scripture was appeal'd to on both sides : They never thought of pretended Impossibilities, manifest and incontestible Contradictions. The Certainty of the Revelation, was the only proof aim'd at ; That the Scripture plainly taught it, was affirm'd by the Church ; That it was not, was maintain'd by Hereticks. Indeed Tradition had a share in the Dispute : For no Scripture being of private Interpretation, the Sense of the Primitive Doctors was strictly inquir'd after ; but all still was resolv'd into the Testimony of God in the Sacred Writings. Yet these Times had their Orators, their Philosophers, their Criticks ; and it is strange, that none of them could perceive, that one, and one, and one, are not one but three ; and that this manifest and incontestable Contradiction should only be a discovery of the Socinians in this Age.

It is also unjust and unreasonable : For the manner of treating a Dispute, must have some proportion with the thing in Dispute. Physical Experiments are not search'd into with Metaphysical Speculations ; nor metaphysical Speculations clear'd by Physical Experiments. Criticisms are unserviceable in Geometry, and an excellent Geometrician may be a lamentable Critick. Yet we have to deal with a sort of Men, who will have Reason to decide of Matters above Reason ; will make Faith and Reason, knowing and believing to be the same thing ; and under pretence of Reasoning, will rob God of his Power over us, and us of the Reward of our Obedience to him.

It is unchristian. If you design to dispute with a Philosopher, then go and ransack Athens and Rome ; out with your Reason as splendidly, and profusely as you can : But for me, who can say with Pacianus, Christian is my Name, and Catholick is my Surname, I can, I will hear nothing but out of the Sacred Scriptures : Whatsoever you intend to teach me of God, must be fetch'd from thence. I never built the hopes of my Salvation upon Aristotle, or Des Cartes : Their Writings are good in their kind ; but so form Religion, they are those Cisterns spoken of by the Prophet, broken Cisterns that can hold no Water. In a Word, there we are so fix'd, and we cannot avoid disputing eternally, if this is not made the Touch Stone of all our Arguments. When we have indulg'd our Reason to the utmost degree, it will prove an egregious Cheat to us, and we shall at last be oblig'd to return whence we came, and say as St. Austin, *Epist. ad Volus. Dandum Deo aliquid posse, quod fateamur nos investigare non posse.* We must agree that God can do those things, be capable of those Operations and Communications, which we must be forc'd to acknowledge to be above all our Enquiries.



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A

# SERMON

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2 Tim. II. 3.

*Hold fast the Form of sound Words.—*

**A**Ltho' the Church is a Divine Institution, the Mystical Body of *Christ*, and the Purchase of his Blood ; Yet the Experience of all Ages has made it appear from the beginning of its happy Establishment, that evil Men and Seducers have attempted not only to ruine its Out-works, but even to blow up its very Foundation. This *Christ* had foreseen when he told his Apostles, *Matth. 18. 7.* that *it must needs be that Offences come.* This St. Paul was not unacquainted with, when he said to the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor. 11. 19.* *There must be also Heresies among you :* No Age or Society being without Men who love to abound in their own Sense ; have not Justice enough to acknowledge their Weakness and Ignorance ; and will rather yield to Passion and Prejudice, than be led by the plain Assertions of Scripture, and the calm and serene Dictates of Reason.

B

So

So great an Evil could not but vehemently affect that zealous Apostle, who had incumbent on him the Care of all the Churches. A truly Episcopal Spirit cannot sit unconcern'd, and see them perish for whom Christ dy'd. Nor could any way be found more effectual to prevent this, than that Men should speak the same things, and agree in uniform Expressions, as well as in the same Profession of Faith, 1 Cor. i. 10. *Now I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no Schisms among you; but that you be perfectly join'd together in the same mind, and in the same Judgment.*

This is the ground of the excellent Direction given in the Text to Timothy, *Hold fast the Form of sound Words.* An Advice which, if necessary at any time, is certainly now of a vast Importance; when the Enthusiast on one side, and the Disputer of this World on the other, have rent Religion to pieces: When Men think it a Discredit to their Parts and Abilities, to think soberly: And instead of uniting against the Common Enemy, will rather suffer the War to be brought into their own Quarters, than part with their private, the crude and indigested Notions!

In speaking to these Words, I will endeavour to show,

- I. *What is the Form of sound Words?*
- II. *How dangerous it is to depart from it.*
- III. *How we ought to behave our selves in relation to them who have departed from it?*

First, Then, *what is the Form of sound Words?* It is nothing else but a Collection of the several Verities diffus'd through the whole Body of the Sacred Scriptures.

An

An express Form, as some have render'd it, not much different in this from the Sence of the *Greek Commentators* : But more truly *Annotations*, a short Account, a Summary of Christian Doctrine, by which Men come to know what to embrace, and what to refuse. This *St. Paul* intends when he tells the *Romans*, Chap. 6. 17. *that they have obey'd from the heart that Form of Doctrine which was deliver'd to them.* But more agreeably to the Original, *into which they were deliver'd.*

A noble Expression, and elegantly treated by *St. Basil* in his Discourse of Baptism. This the Apostle calls in the Verse next to the Text, *ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει*, that excellent Trust committed to the Shepherds of the Flock, *Rom. 12. 6.* He will have no preaching, no establishing of any Doctrine, but *ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ αἰσίου*. All Sciences have their *Axiomata*, their first Principles, the ground of all their Demonstrations. Christianity has its *Axiomata* *ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, on which all the rest is built. Whatsoever we have to say, must be reduc'd to that, and without it ought not to be admitted.

These *Axiomata* *αὐτόνομα*, these Fundamental Principles of Christianity are, 1<sup>st</sup>. the *Apostolical Creed*. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Those Enlargements on it, which the growth of Heresies made necessary in the first General Councils. These four which *Gregory* the Great profess'd to reverence next to the four Gospels.

First, The *Apostolical Creed*, that unchangeable Rule of Faith, as *Tertullian* calls it. *Cordis signaculum & Fidei nostræ Sacramentum.* That which the Fathers understood by the answer of a good Conscience towards God; that is, a solemn Profession, Declaration of what Religion obliges us to believe, and from which we ought not to depart. This is the first Shield of Faith, which the Church oppos'd to the early Attempts of those

Hereticks who thought to have stifi'd her in her Infancy. This Confession of *God the Father, of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and of the Holy Spirit*, which is the Substance of that Creed, made unsuccessful the Endeavours of *Simon, Cerinthus, Bafilides, Menander, Carpocrates*, and the swarm of impure *Gnosticks*. By this every Christian was initiated to Religion, gave a reason of the Hope that was in him; and became a Member of that Society here on Earth, which after perseverance in well doing is to be rewarded in Heaven.

I know that a Critick of this Age, a Person of the first rank in the Common-wealth of Learning, has disputed both the Antiquity and Universality of this Creed. A Notion too unadvisedly taken up by several Authors, who thought that the *Socinians* took too great an Advantage from the Simplicity of its Articles. He made it to be only a Creed of the Latin or Western Church, which the Catechumens were taught before their Admission to Baptism. He produces two of *St. Irenæus*; three of *Tertullian*; one of *St. Cyril of Jerusalem*; three of *Ruffinus*, and insists on some difference even between the Fathers who have been the Expositors of this Creed; *St. Austin, Chrysologus, Maximus*, and others.

But notwithstanding all this, whosoever will look into the Creeds of *St. Irenæus* and *Tertullian*; for that of *St. Cyril* was after the *Nicene Council*, and those which *Ruffinus* has compar'd, that is, the *Roman*, the *Aquileian*, and the *Oriental* Creeds, will find so mighty an agreement, and the variations so minute and inconsiderable, as to make impossible any substantial difference.

And it is certainly a strange Fancy, that the *Socinians* should take an advantage from the Simplicity of these Articles, which being but a Compendium of the

New Testament, are at last resolv'd into it. For the Sence of that Creed must be that of the Scriptures, of which it is an *Eptome*. And how can they argue against the Divinity of *Christ*, and of the *Holy Spirit*, from their not being call'd God in the Creed, when the Scriptures are so full in asserting the Unity of God, and the Trinity of Persons in that one Adorable and Divine Nature? Are we not baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Are there not Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and are not these three one? Is not *Christ* declar'd to be, God blessed over all for ever? and God manifested in the Flesh? Are we not told that the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God, and that to lye to the Holy Spirit, is to lye to God?

This Objection is of that Clearness and Evidence, is so far from giving them any Advantage, and they have found themselves so press'd by it, that they have been forc'd to split on another Rock, and say that the Form of Baptism is no part of Scripture, and is only an addition to St *Matthew*. That the Place of St. *John* is another, and that the Word *GOD*, is not to be found in the cited Scriptures. Shifts unbecoming learned Men! Which even *Praxeas* and *Sabellius* would have blush'd at. The former oppos'd by *Tertullian*, who tells him, that this Rule of Faith is come down to us from the beginning of the Gospel. The latter by *Dionysius* of *Alexandria*, who tells him, and *Euseb.* l. 7. c. 6. That the Persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are indivisibly united in the same Divine Nature.

2dly, The Forms agreed upon in the Primitive Councils, at *Nice*, *Antioch*, *Sardis*, *Ephesus*, *Constantinople*, *Chalcedon*, &c. are no Additions to, but only Expli-  
cations of the first Form. They are still the Form of  
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found Words. It is not in the Power of the Church to make new Forms; new Articles of Faith. And in this the Church of Rome is inexcusable, and guilty of a Schism, which she has charg'd others with. But to declare and explain the Faith, is an essential part of its Power. The growing Heresies were the occasion of the Apostolical Creed, the first Remedy apply'd to this raging Disease. The ~~controversies~~ *controversies*, the vain and noisie Oppositions of a pretended Knowledge, oblig'd them to deliver the sacred System of Divine Verities. But when the old Horeticks were worn out, leaving to the World a sad remembrance of their gross Follies and Inimicities; and a new sort sprung up, who did attempt to overthrow the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints by Blasphemous Heterodoxies. It was high time for the Church, to make the Creed more comprehensive than it was at first; give a greater extent to its Articles, and leave safe to future Ages the *Depositem* which they had receiv'd. And indeed it would have been very happy for the Church, if Men keeping to the Plainness and Simplicity of the Revelation, had not presum'd to go farther. Oh, that an humble Faith had stifi'd Curiosity in its first Attempts to inquire into Divine Mysteries with weak Ratiocinations, and Philosophy never assum'd to bring Divinity to be try'd at the Bar of humane Reason! Then Mercy and Faith would have kiss'd each other, and God, even our God, would have given us his Blessing. But Man forgot that *fratrem* Majesty's oppressor & Gloria, That the bold and daring Searcher into the Majesty of God will be oppress'd and sink under the weight of his Glory. He launch'd into a Sea in which the Rocks and Sands on all sides threatn'd a sad and inevitable Ruine.



God has reveal'd to us his Existence and the Unity of his Nature. He has told us, that in that one indivisible and inseparable Nature, are *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*. He has asserted the *Father to be God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God*. He has taught us that *the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Holy Ghost Father or Son*. He has inform'd us, that *in the Fulness of times he sent his only Son to take our Nature*: That *the Word was made Flesh, and offer'd himself a Sacrifice for us*. In such plain Propositions as these has he commanded us to acquiesce. Faith is the Duty of this; Intuition and Knowledge the Privilege of another Life. The Perceptions of our present State, have no proportion with so incomprehensible an Object. Had we stay'd there, the Church would have been a *City at Unity within it self*. But Man not contented with this, strives to understand that which God has not been pleas'd to reveal; that is, the *Nexus*, or manner of in-being of the Three Persons; The *How*, these three can be one: The Way of the Union of the two Natures in one adorable Person *Christ Jesus*; and having no other Guide but his Reason, intangles himself in inextricable Difficulties.

Of this sort were *Paul of Samosatum*, Patriarch of *Antioch*, *Photinus* Bishop of *Syracusa*, *Praxeas*, *Noëtus*, *Sabellius*, *Arrius*, *Apollinaris*, *Nestorius*, *Eutyches*, and in this very Age *Socinus* the Reviver of the *Samosatenian*, and *Photinian* Heresie. These have been the incendiaries of the Church, and the great Disturbers of its Peace: The Men who have made it necessary to enlarge the Form of sound Words, and were the occasion of the Creeds made in the Councils of which they bear the Names.

*Sabellius* own'd the Unity of the Divine Nature; but

but struck with the Evidence of those Texts which speak the Son and the Holy Spirit to be God, could not deny a Trinity, but made it only to consist of *meer Names*, or *Denominations*, as St. Basil expresses it, *Hab. 27. pag. 602.* Or as St. Athanasius has it, *one only Person, the Father acting under different Names.* A Notion which the present *Socinians* seem too too willing to embrace. *Arrius* own'd a Trinity of Persons, and not of Names. He saw that the poor shift of *Sabellius* was irreconcilable with that Oeconomy which so clearly appears in the Scriptures. But by admitting three Principles he destroy'd the Unity of God, and was the first Author of the chymical distinction of a God made and a God unmade, of a Son *ὁμοούσιος* but not *ὁμοούσιος*, of the like, but not of the same Substance. *Apollinaris* own'd the Incarnation. *The Word was made Flesh*, was an Authority of that Weight and Clearness, as gave not the least ground to Primitive Ages for Allegories and little Criticisms so much us'd in this. But he destroy'd the Union of the two Natures, by denying that Christ had a Soul, and leaving the Divinity to inform his Body. *Nestorius* Patriarch of *Constantinople*, own'd the two Natures, but deny'd their Union in one Person. He would have two Persons as well as two Natures. The *λογος*, and the *Man*. The *ὁμοούσιος*, but not the *ὁμοούσιος*. *Eutyches* acknowledged the Incarnation; but maintain'd a Singularity of Nature with that of a Person. He would have the Humanity to be absorb'd, and the God to have annihilated the Man. All these the Church of God condemn'd by the Form of sound Words contain'd in the several Creeds.

The sober Church of *England* sensible that even in point of Reformation we are apt to out-run the Mark; and under pretence of forsaking old Errors really fall into



our Belief, *adly*, By admitting the Article, but using other Words than the Church to express or explain it by. The one is absolutely to depart from the sound Words themselves: The other, from the Form in which they are put.

The first has been done by the Hereticks already mention'd. The unfortunate Attempt has been renew'd by Socinus, and his Followers; but by none so wholly, as by a sort of pretended witty People, who sham'd of the *inhumane* and irrational Profession of *unmanly Atheism*, have under the Name of *Deists* endeavour'd to explode all reveal'd Religion. To these Socinus has lent most of their Arguments: From that side who have oppos'd a part of the Revelation, these have learn'd to reject the whole. And tho' I should think it unjust and uncharitable to think that the present Socinians are *Deists*, or give the *Deists* any design'd Encouragement; yet I will beg leave to assert, that taking an exact view of the *Deistical* and *Socinian* System, there will appear no very vast difference; *Deism* being nothing else but *Socinianism* improv'd; and *Socinianism* nothing else but *Deism* contracted.

The second, that is to keep to the Article, but put it in other Words, has been done by some amongst our selves. Whether this has been the Effect of a too much indulg'd Curiosity, or of an imprudent Zeal: Whether the Heat of the Dispute, and the pressing Efforts of the Enemy has driven them from their Anchors; Whether they have been too fond of the Offspring of their own Brains; or whether a mixture of all these together has been the occasion of it, is difficult to judge; But it is certain that the Press has groan'd under the burthen of new Discoveries; brought forth a swarm of Answers and Replies fuller of Heat than Light; and made it necessary for the Peace of the Church, that a Curtain should

should be drawn over abundance of Writings, where Learning, Modesty, and Gender should have had a greater share than really they can pretend to. X

Of the first of these, it is easy to show how dangerous it is to depart from the Form of sound Words. For what greater danger can we fall into, than to make *Shipwreck concerning the Faith*? A State so much the more dangerous, because it destroys the very ground of our hopes. For he that believes shall be saved. He that does not believe is condemn'd already. To differ from an Orthodox Church, of which we are Members, in a point of Ceremony, is very foolish, if the difference is carry'd so far as to make a Schism: Toleration, tho' it secures us from the Laws of Men, not acquitting us at all in the sight of God. But how much deeper is that Guilt, which lays the Ax to the Root of the Tree, and having corrupted our Minds, makes us *reprobate concerning the Faith*. An Inconveniency which the best and earliest Ages shew'd their detestation of by their frequent *anathemas* against it.

But of the second, it does not seem so easy to pronounce. For if Men in the Fundamental Articles of our Holy Religion keep really, and unfeignedly to the truth of what is propos'd, as in the Trinity and Incarnation; shall we quarrel with them for using such Words as are either unknown to Antiquity, or rejected by the Doctors of the present Church? May not God reveal to us what the Fathers of *Nice* or *Chalcedon* were ignorant of? And as long as we own the Substance of the Article as strictly as our strictest Opposers, can any Fault be found with any Explication? Yet this will prove a wretched piece of Sophistry, if the following Inconveniencies are seriously consider'd: 1<sup>st</sup> That to depart from the Form which the Church has us'd herself to, is against her Unity and Peace. 2<sup>dly</sup>, That it is the way to unsettle pious Minds. 3<sup>dly</sup>, That it can never be done without giving the Adversaries a mighty Advantage.



*First, It is against the Unity and Peace of the Church.* Words are the Interpreters of our Thoughts, and the only way we have to know one anothers Minds: A Communication which Nature has taught, Experience improv'd, and the mutual Commerce of Mankind rais'd to an absolute necessity. But if this is true in relation to the Affairs of this World, and is the Foundation of all Arts and Sciences; how much more will it hold in respect to Religious Matters, where every Error is dangerous, and draws along with it so many fatal Consequences. Religion, the grand Duty of Man, is convey'd into the Soul by hearing, and comes short of its Energy, if the Terms which it is express'd by, are unusual, and do not in a great measure answer both its Nature, and the end which it proposes. And Christianity being to be disseminated, and the Gospel to sound to the Ends of the World, a Happiness to be offer'd to the Jew and Gentile, to the Grecian and Barbarian, to all Nations, Ages, Sexes, and Capacities, it was highly wise to deliver it in as short a compass, and in as settled a manner of Expression as the Nature of the thing could bear, and the difference of Mens Understandings agree with.

The Apostles having left us the Form of sound Words, it became the Care of the Bishops and Successors to preserve it entire. But they saw the utter impossibility of doing it, and a door open to all manner of Schisms, if Men were not confin'd to such and such Words, as well as such and such Writings. And I dare presume to say, that this sunk to Sleep in these holy and learned Mens Minds, that what vocal in this Age heats and Animosities, or the *Pyrrhonian* and *Sceptical* Philosophy brought into the Church, was nothing else but an indefatigable Care and Industry to declare the Faith after such a manner, as should in after Ages be kept inviolate.

So arose the Fathers of new Words, new Lights,

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new Expressions, new Explications, as that which naturally brings in a new Sense, that they ever look'd on them with a kind of Jealousie; and would never admit them, till they were clearly understood, and authoriz'd by the common Consent of the Christian World, There is an eminent Instance of this in the *ὁμοούσιον*, and *ὁμοῦσιον*, which tho' the most expressive Words that could be, the one in relation to the Unity of the Divine Nature, the other in relation to the Subsistencies of the Divine Persons; yet met with a vast opposition, the one in the Greek, the other in the Latin Church, till a long canvassing, and at last the determination of the Sacred Councils had fix'd both their Use and their Sense.

Innovation brings in Heresie, and Heresie shelters Innovation. The Apostle concludes the first to *Timothy*, by charging him pathetically to keep that which is committed to his Trust, and to avoid profane and vain Babblings, *νενοφωίας*, vain and empty Sounds. The Latin Interpreter reads more agreeably to the old Copies, *prophanas vocum novitates*. I say more agreeably to the ancient Copies: For *St. Basil*, and *St. Chrysostom* read not *νενοφωίας*, but *καινοφωίας*, new Sounds, new Words; which shews that it was so in the Exemplaries us'd by those Fathers: Expressions which by Being new are both suspicious and dangerous.

The Fathers of the third Council of *Constantinople*, which is the sixth General, and in which Pope *Honorius*, and the *Monothelites* were condemn'd, were so sensible of the Evils occasion'd by this, that they concluded their last Action, by subjecting to deprivation, if they were Bishops or Clerks; or to Excommunication, if they were Laicks, whosoever did bring in any *καινοφωίαν*, *καὶ λέξιν ἐφευρέσαν*, new Words, and new Explications: It being the Infirmary of Human Nature to be strangely affected with Novelty; and an Argument seldom wanting them, who take the glittering for the solid and weighty part of it. But when an Innovator, who has catch'd a bright Cloud instead of the Sun,

Sun, comes to be encounter'd by the Orthodox, whose Zeal is so much the warmer, because it is inflam'd by the Sence of an old Truth, then what Devastations, what Tragedies, what Schisms, what Contentions are seen in the Church?

*Secondly, It unsettles pious Minds.* New Explications are like *Meteors*, which set Men on gazing, and always portend Ruine to Religion. When by an humble and settled Reverence for what God has propos'd to us by the Ministry of his Church, we have us'd our selves to a form of Doctrine; whatsoever is foreign to it, offers our Minds an incredible Violence; Pious Ears are offended at it; and they who know better how to feel the Power of Religion, than to talk of it, are horribly scandaliz'd. They have us'd themselves to an awful Belief and Adoration of Mysteries. They have acquiesc'd in the receiv'd Expressions of the Universal Church; more secure in their rest on the Breasts of their Mother, than if all the Guards in the World were plac'd round about them; and consequently strangely astonish'd, when an Innovator strives to tear them out of their Sanctuary.

No Answer can be made to this, but a pretence of Necessity, that the *Socinians* have made it unavoidable in their Disputes against the blessed *Trinity* and *Incarnation*, to run on a new Method; and that *St. Austin* has taught us, and before him *St. Cyprian*; and of their Words a Canon has been made, *That Melius est ut scandalum oriatur quam Caritas relinquatur.* It is more tolerable to give an occasion of scandal, than that Truth should be left undefended.

But where does the Necessity appear? Are we not sensible, that the Arguments against our Mysteries are neither new nor invincible? Were not the *Arrians* much better Disputants than the Scholars of *Socinus*, who are forc'd to give *Socinianism* the Face of *Arrianism*, or else it is unreasonable to the utmost degree. Has the old way of answer-

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ing been yet worked? Have not the decisions of the Councils been like a Rock, on which indeed these proud Waves have beat; but have been forc'd back, broken, and dispers'd? I humbly beg leave to ask, whether the receiv'd way of debating these sacred Doctrines can support it self or no? If it can; where is the necessity of any new one? And if it cannot; how comes that to be now so unsuccessful, which the Church has been victorious by in all Ages and Places of the Christian World?

It fills learned Men with Grief and Indignation to see some of our late Authors strive to entangle an Elephant in a Spider's Web, and expect the lamentable Issue of their Proceeding, who, as Gregory the Great expresses it, *lib. 6. cap. 37. Wanting Humility to be Disciples of the Truth, become at last the Patrons of Error.* The Ecclesiastical History observes that the Great Basil of Seleucia, and Gregory of Nazianzum, before they offer'd to exercise their Episcopal Function, did give themselves for thirteen years together, in the Retirement of a private Life, to the Study of the Holy Scriptures. *Illarum sententiam non ex proprio ingenio sed ex majorum ratione & auctoritate interpretantes.* Not interpreting them as they pleas'd, says the Historian, but conforming their Interpretations to the Sense and Authority of the Ancients. A safe and an excellent Rule to us; and a noble Proof, by the way, of the Sense of the *Apostolic* Fathers: These two eminent Bishops having been so zealous of the Nicene Faith, which they had learn'd from the Reasons and Authority of the Ancients in their Interpretations of Scripture.

Thirdly, It cannot be done without giving the Adversaries a mighty Advantage. By Adversaries I mean all the Opposers of the sacred Truths: But most particularly the Socinians; of whom it must be acknowledged, that in their first Prints they manag'd this Controversie in a dull and languishing sort of a way; and were really at a loss, till the

the unwary manner of writing of some amongst us, set them again on a full Cry, and made them more eager and vehement. Till then, their Objections were idle, and their Answers to ours strain'd and unnatural. But some must pretend to explain things inexplicable, and understand things incomprehensible. The *Socinians* sensible of the Advantage, remove all their Batteries, and place them against that weak side; and what work they were like to have made, if more accurate Writers had not step'd in, learned Men see and grieve. Only disingenuous in this, that when they have expos'd a Writer, they think to have overcome the Church; as if the Church did warrant all their Inadvertencies, who pretend to write in her Defence, or espouse private Notions, which she never knew, nor ever will own.

This eminently appears in one of their latest Prints, call'd *A Discourse concerning the Real and Nominal Trinitarians*. This they take to be the lucky hit. If you believe them, the Church is made up either of *Trinitarians*, who really assert three Gods; or of *Sabellians*, who mean no more by three Persons, than three meer Modes or Denominations; and this Notion they have carry'd so far, and so thoroughly perswaded themselves of the Truth and Strength of it, that it has swallow'd up all their other Topicks. Whereas there never was perhaps a more unjust way of arguing in the World: For the Church is so far from being divided into such Real and Nominal Trinitarians, as they are pleas'd to represent us, that there is no such thing in Nature. There is no Church, or part of the Church, which believes any more than one Infinite and Eternal God. There is no Church, or part of the Church, which ever plac'd the Trinity of Persons in meer Modes, Relations, Names, or Offices. There is no Church, or part of the Church, but what has admitted a Real Unity in Trinity, and a Real Trinity in Unity, but has declar'd the *Modus*, or manner, to be altogether incomprehensible.

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But where then have the *Socinians* met with a ground for this bold Assertion? Truly from some unhappy Expressions of Men, who have not been judicious and exact enough to see all the Consequences which flow from their Principles; and have not perceiv'd that an Adversary could not be oblig'd to be so equitable, as not to carry those Consequences further than ever they were intended. The *Socinians* did hear some talk of Three Infinite Minds and Spirits; an Expression indeed harsh and new! And an Infinite Mind, or Spirit, being the definition of God, they have concluded that they asserted Three Gods. But they have not had the Justice to consider, that they who asserted Three Infinite Minds and Spirits, asserted them in one altogether indivisible and inseparable, that is, in a Numerical Nature. On the other side, they have heard that the Three Persons were the several Modes, and Relations of the Divine Nature. They presently run upon the Notion of Modes in created Beings, which are only the several Affections of Substances; and concluded that such a sort of a Trinity is only of Modes and Denominations: But they have not had the Justice to consider that the *τρόποι ὑποστάσεως*, or *Modes of Subsistence*, are quite of another Nature; That whatsoever is in God, is God; That the Subsistences and Relations are all substantial; and that the Church never pretended, nor these Authors themselves, that they could give any adequate representation of an Object incomprehensible.

In the mean time they have made a diversion; heated several great and learned Men one against another; and by equally misrepresenting both, have given us a sad Instance how dangerous it is to depart from the Form of sound Words.

I draw now to a Conclusion; and come to shew, how we ought to behave our selves in relation to them who have departed from it. Our behaviour must be limited by so many several Rules, as there are Persons who have done it.

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First, Those without, who have departed from the Article it self. Secondly, Those within, who have departed from the Terms which the Church expresses it by.

The only Adversaries of the Sacred Doctrine in this Age, are the *Socinians*. I humbly conceive, that that part of the Injunctions which concerns the Angels of the Church, the most Reverend the Archbishops and Bishops, is no part of our business: We must not presume to prescribe to them from whom we ought to receive Laws: They are the Principle of Order and Unity in the Church: They are Stars of the first Magnitude, and in that Elevation of Zeal and Knowledge, that as they see farther, and move in a far larger extent than we do; so they cannot be wanting to themselves, when grievous Wolves enter in amongst us, not sparing the Flock, I confine my self to us, whose by the Trust committed to our Care; may come to be engag'd in these Disputes.

Of the *Socinians*, several are Persons of Learning and Conscience, acquainted with all the fine sort of Literature, and who have done for and in a bad Cause as much as Men can do: It is an Honour to the Church to have such Adversaries to deal with. Truth never appears with more force, than when it is most strongly oppos'd. In our late Disputes against *Papery*, a small Stock of Learning and Common Sense was enough to shew its Folly: In the wrangling War with the Dissenters, we have been forc'd to argue with a sort of Writers who scarce understood good Language. But in this, we meet with a subtil and strong Enemy, well fitted with all Materials for War; and I look upon it as a Providence of God, who turns all things to the good of his Servants, that this Controversie will put us of the Clergy upon finer, better, and more comprehensive Studies.

But there is another sort of *Socinians*; and they are they who pretend to make a Bustle in the World; Men, who, after a long course of Atheism and Debauchery, come at



last to think of Religion; not because they design to pursue the ends, or submit to the Duties of it, but because in an Age where so many Religions are allow'd, it is not handsome to be without one. They live still as they did before, with as little care as ever of their Eternal Concerns; but think Religion only to consist in talking at random of Religious Matters. These Heroes scorn to fall upon some part of the Discipline and Liturgy of the Church, as other Mortals have done, but presently impeach its Faith, its Articles; stare Mankind in the face; and with that mouth us'd before to blaspheme and reproach their Maker, they dare to deny the Lord that bought them. Every Club, Coffee-house, or Tavern, is the Scene of the Tragedy; and Religion, the most serious and grave business of Man's Life, the Exercise of the Church, Family, or Closter, is villainously prostituted over a Dish of Coffee, or a Bottle of Wine.

The way to deal with these, is not to dispute: An evil heart of Unbelief has turn'd them aside, that they cannot say there is a Lye in my right hand: They are to be the Object of our Prayers, and Tears to God for their Conversion. The last Argument that remains, is by our good Examples to bring them to some Sence of Morality.

But against the others we ought to dispute and to write: When Error is always ready to speak, Truth ought not to be silent. We cannot be afraid of a Cause, which the Glorious Company of the Apostles has taught, the Noble Army of Martyrs maintain'd, and the Holy Church throughout all the World so solemnly acknowledg'd. But it is diligently to be observ'd, that few Reasons, and these good; Authorities, and these not contested; an exact and accurate way of writing, are the means to stop a Controversie. Above all things, Heat and Passion ought to claim no part in the Dispute: Ill Language is a bad Introduction for the best Argument. Either we design to confute, instruct, and perswade them, or we do not: If we do not, we detain

the Truth of God in Hypocrisie, and make it subservient to mean and inglorious Ends: And if we do, we cannot but be sensible, that Truth, Gravity, Exactness, and Strength of Reason, are strangely obstructed by a sordid and malicious way of writing.

But if we are to be so just to them without, how much more to them within? It is one of the Excesses which God reproaches the Wicked with, *Pf. 50. 20. to sit and speak against his Brother, to slander his own Mother's Son.* A Sin not allowable in the Jewish, much less in the Christian Church; not pardonable in a Laick, much less in a Clerk. It has been observ'd of the old *Romans*, that they scarce ever felt any Convulsion in their State, till their victorious Arms were turn'd against themselves, and destroy'd in very few years the Prosperity of many Ages. It has appear'd all along, our Adversaries themselves being Judges, that the great Piety, mighty Genius, vast Parts, profound Learning, and flowing Eloquence of the Clergy of this Nation, has made the Church of *England* venerable to all the World; They have brought the Clamouring Papist to shame and despair of Success: They have silenc'd the buzzing Non-conformist. No Argument has fallen into their hands, but what they have exhausted with an incredible Felicity of Thought and Expression; and must we turn those never foil'd Weapons into our own Bowels? Is this a time to become the Contrivers of our own ruins, whilst the Enemy takes breath, and has nothing left to do, but to inflame our unhappy Contentions?

I am not for stifling the Truth. God forbid! It would be in vain; for it is great, and it must prevail. I would have Zeal to take its course, and our mouth to be open, and our heart enlarg'd to all Men: But at the same time I would have fervent Charity amongst our selves; and think it insufferable to bite and devour one another, till we are consum'd of one another.

To avoid so dangerous an Excess, let us take leave of our Passions when we begin to speak or write about these Sacred Matters. Passion hinders us from taking the real Advantages of an Argument, and makes us to administer Poison instead of a Medicine. It generally puts us on the wrong side of the Question; and the Man does sadly expose the Writer. It has the same Effect on him against whom we write: It hurries him to a retaliation; and between two hot Spirits, Truth vanishes, and only the wrangling part remains. It is that which we abhor in Conversation, and is not suffer'd amongst civiliz'd People. We wrangle in Print, and stamp on Paper the lasting marks of Fury and Prejudice. In the mean time the Judicious Reader pities Humane Weakness; wants a stock of Patience to read the Book through, and leaves us at last to the Judgment of the great Judge. But a judicious Reader is somewhat rare. The loose witty People swallow greedily the sarcastical, and leave the serious part. By this Religion is expos'd, and cruelly misrepresented. This has been the ground of many Canons taken from the grave Admonitions of the Fathers, and in particular the 53 of our Church.

Let us unanimously return to the Form of sound Words. That which shews the Vanity and Unpracticableness of Explications beyond the Power of Contradiction, is, that there is none but what is liable to invincible Objections; and indeed how can it be otherwise, when the Subject transcends all our Apprehensions? Man who is scarce acquainted with himself, will pretend to decide of the Nature of God! A poor, finite, and limited Being, will become a Judge of Eternity and Imensity! One who does not know the least of his Soul's Operations, will presume to understand the several ways of Communication of the Divine Nature! Away with this pretended Knowledge, which at the bottom is nothing but Noise and Talk! Away with that glittering Nonsense, which is not worthy to take up

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a serious Man's leisure. For my part I am resolv'd, to Adore, and to Believe, I will give an undesign'd Assent to what is reveal'd; and come to God with this Homage and Submission of my Understanding, concerning what he is pleas'd to conceal from me. I will have mean Thoughts of this present Life, since in it we know so little, and a mighty desire of that which is to come, since in it we shall know so much. In the mean time, I shall conclude this Discourse with the excellent Prayer of St. Basil in his 12th. Book of the *Trinity*, and doubt not my Reverend Brethren, but you will join with me in it. *Confiteor* *ua hanc Conscientie meae vocem; ut quod in regenerationis meae symbolo baptizatus in Patre, Filio, & Spiritu Sancto professus sum, semper obtineam. Preterea in meo Oculum* that Answer of a good Conscience, that I may ever have, that what I have profess'd at my Regeneration, when I was baptiz'd in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

To these Three Co-eternal, Co-equal, and Co-substantial Persons, in that one Adorable, Incomprehensible, and Inconceivable Nature.

To the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

To the only Begotten Son, true God of true God, Light of Light, very God of very God.

To the Holy and Eternal Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son,

All Honour and Glory now and for ever.

